

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 2009

The Honorable Alan Mollohan, Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Wolf, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mollohan and Representative Wolf:

As Members of Congress with long-standing interest in the health and viability of our nation's oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes, we are writing to request robust funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in Fiscal Year 2010. We greatly appreciate the generous support provided to NOAA in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the Subcommittee's Fiscal Year 2009 spending bill, and would like to build on these efforts to restore the agency by increasing the agency's funding level to \$5 billion.

Since Fiscal Year 2005, NOAA's funding has remained flat at \$3.9 billion, resulting in severely eroded funding for NOAA's base programs—including weather forecasting, fisheries research and management, ocean wildlife protection, spill response, ocean and atmospheric observing, and habitat conservation and restoration. This loss in capability has a direct impact on constituents in every state, and especially in coastal states.

Fortunately, the FY09 omnibus appropriations bill included a desperately needed increase for NOAA, providing \$4.37 billion. This was a welcome step in the right direction for an agency that monitors and manages so many critical natural processes, but this increase simply brings funding for the agency back to its FY05 level once adjusted for inflation. Our funding request is founded upon the recommendations of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative (Joint Initiative) and the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration's restoration strategy. Responding to a congressional request, the Joint Initiative identified high priority actions needed to restore our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes in its 2006 report entitled *From Sea to Shining Sea*. The report identified \$750 million in immediate additional funding priorities for Federal ocean programs, over \$500 million of which was directed towards NOAA programs. NOAA's budget should approach \$5 billion to address the very highest priority ocean and coastal activities identified by the Joint Initiative.

There are several challenges facing NOAA in the near term that justify the need for increasing the FY10 appropriation to \$5 billion. NOAA has a mandate to maintain its satellite capabilities, which are essential for weather forecasting and other earth observing needs. The costs for such satellites and sensors will continue to increase over the next few fiscal cycles. This increase should not come at the cost of shifting funding from non-satellite programs across the agency. Sufficient funding is also necessary to support improvement in "wet" programs of NOAA. In his


budget request, President Obama seeks to improve weather forecasting, fisheries management, ocean programs, and climate and ocean research, and an FY10 appropriation of \$5 billion is essential to meeting all of these challenges. The attached fact sheet has more detailed descriptions of the critical services that NOAA offers our nation, and some specific programs that need further funding.

As Members of Congress who appreciate the value and contributions given by our oceans, coasts and Great Lakes, we believe that the wise investment of taxpayer dollars in NOAA will result in considerable economic and ecological benefits to our nation. Although we understand difficult decisions must be made in the limited budget available for FY10, we urge the CJS Subcommittee to give every consideration to achieving significant progress toward a funding level of \$5 billion for NOAA.

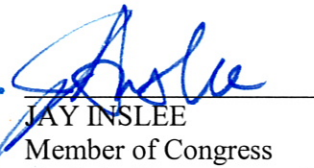
Sincerely,




SAM FARR
Member of Congress
Cochair, House Ocean Caucus



VERNON EHLERS
Member of Congress
Cochair, House Ocean Caucus



JAY INSLEE
Member of Congress
Cochair, House Ocean Caucus

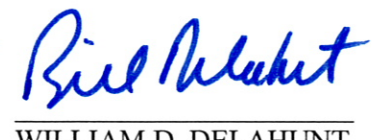

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Member of Congress



LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress

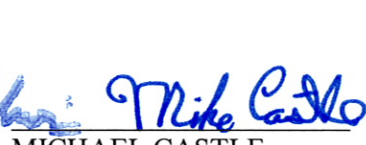

PETER DEFAZIO
Member of Congress



BRIAN BAIRD
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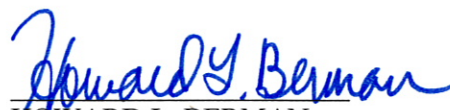

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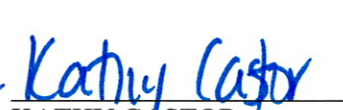

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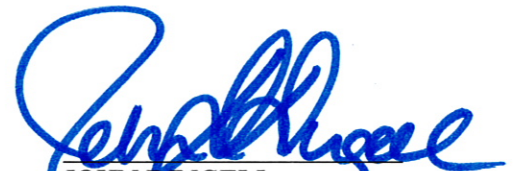

TAMMY BALDWIN
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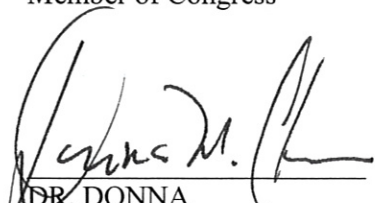

ROSA L. DELAURO
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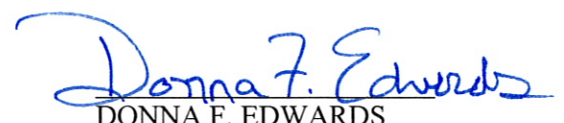

HOWARD L. BERMAN
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KATHY CASTOR
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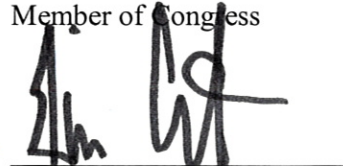

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TIM BISHOP
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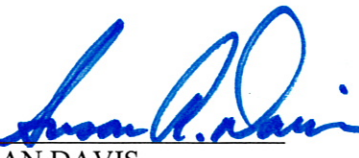

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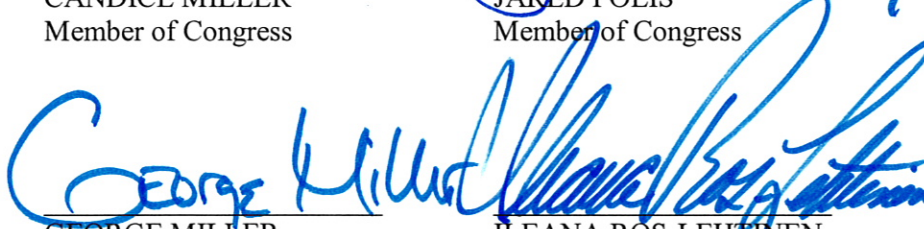

CHELLIE PINGREE
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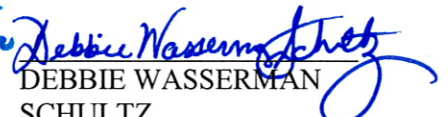

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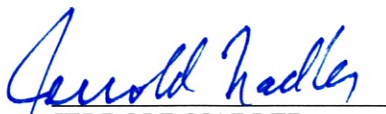

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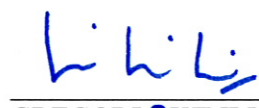

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
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GEORGE MILLER
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ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
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DEBBIE WASSERMAN
SCHULTZ
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JERROLD NADLER
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DIANE WATSON
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BETTY SUTTON
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ROBERT WEXLER
Member of Congress



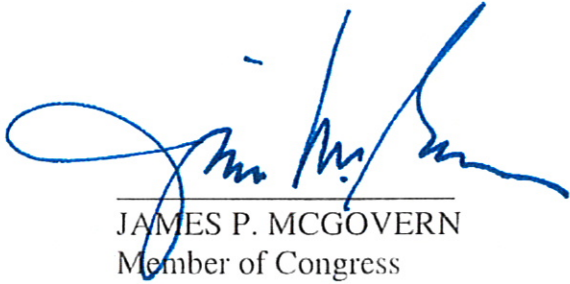
LYNN WOOLSEY
Member of Congress



DAVID WU
Member of Congress



CAROL SHEA-PORTER
Member of Congress



JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress

Attachment: Fact sheet highlighting NOAA critical services and priority programs (one page).

THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Economic Benefits Funding for NOAA's products and services generates significant return on investment due to the support they provide for major industries/sectors of our economy.

- Management and restoration programs help maintain healthy coastal and marine ecosystems that support commercial fishing, tourism, and recreation, generating tens of billions of dollars in economic activity.
- Forecasts and models touch nearly one-third of the U.S. economy, which is sensitive to weather and climate, and provide critical information to managers and insurers during severe weather events.
- Navigation data supports hundreds of billions of dollars in trade that passes through U.S. ports each year.

Energy & Climate Services In the face of a changing climate, NOAA's science, technology, products, and services contribute to our nation's transition to a green economy and a more sustainable energy policy.

- Weather and climate forecasting, observations, and mapping are critical for managing energy distribution and usage, exploiting emerging renewable energy opportunities, and for tracking emerging carbon financial markets.
- Extensive research of the atmosphere and ocean allows for improved understanding of climate change and its potential impacts and provides the sound science needed to counteract and adapt to such changes.
- Land, sea, air and space observational assets provide long-term, sustained monitoring to understand and predict climate change and inform management decisions accordingly.

Ecosystem Services A holistic, ecosystem-based approach to managing our ocean and coastal resources is essential.

- Protecting and managing ocean wildlife, such as sea turtles, marine mammals, and coral reefs to prevent their loss.
- Conducting research and cooperative studies to support fisheries management decisions and enforce fisheries laws.
- Managing marine protected areas, such as national marine sanctuaries and national estuarine reserves.
- Monitoring water quality to detect harmful algal blooms, invasive species, and marine debris.
- Providing grants to state and local governments to assist in managing myriad activities in coastal areas.

PRIORITY PROGRAMS IN NEED OF INCREASED FUNDING

Ocean and Coastal Conservation and Management These programs manage essential resources and habitats:

- Implementation of amendments to the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which seek to end overfishing
- Coastal Zone Management and the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program
- National Estuarine Research Reserve System, National Marine Sanctuaries Program, Community-based Habitat Restoration Program, and the Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Program

Ocean Science and Research Basic research funding is necessary to develop strategies for living in a changing world:

- Ocean acidification, Oceans and Human Health, and other research will help to better understand the impacts of climate change on marine fisheries, mammals, and coastal and ocean ecosystems.
- The President's request for resources in support of the Ocean Research Priorities Plan should be supported.
- Competitive extramural grants, including: National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science Research, Ocean Exploration, National Undersea Research Program, Sea Grant, regional laboratories, seafood safety, and ecosystem-based research and cooperative studies supporting salt and freshwater fisheries management and enforcement of fisheries laws.

Monitoring, Observing, Modeling, and Mapping The products these programs offer are vital to many users:

- Oil spill preparedness, prevention, and response programs, including the Office of Response and Restoration Base
- Mapping and Charting, Geodesy, and Tides and Currents, Physical Oceanographic Real Time System (PORTS)
- Integrated Ocean Observing System including regional systems
- NOAA Fleet operations and charters.
- The national water quality monitoring network, Harmful Algal Bloom forecasting, ballast water demonstration, early warning/detection for invasive species, marine debris, survey and monitoring of fish and protected species, as well as social and economic studies.

Education and Outreach Developing capacity to train future scientists and managers is critical to long-term success:

- Programs identified under the NOAA Education category
- NOAA Sea Grant education and outreach activities
- The broader interagency ocean education strategy being developed under the auspice of the White House Committee on Ocean Policy, and in particular, education programs in the National Science Foundation.